

# SIGNS

**Hamilton County Planning and Development, Room 801 County Administration Building, (513) 946-4550**

## **I. WHY IS A BUILDING PERMIT REQUIRED?**

To control visual clutter and assure signs are safely and properly installed.

## **II. WHAT CODES/REGULATIONS ARE APPLICABLE?**

All work performed must be in accordance with the *Ohio Building Code* (includes *NFPA*), *Hamilton County Building Code*, *Hamilton County Zoning Resolution* (or applicable township zoning), *Hamilton County Flood Damage Prevention Regulations*, and all other relevant laws and ordinances.

Contact the following agencies:

Hamilton County Department of Building Inspections	(513) 946-4550
Hamilton County Rural Zoning Commission (or local township zoning administrator)	(513) 946-4501
Hamilton County Department of Public Works	(513) 946-4750
Hamilton County Engineer	(513) 946-4250
Inspection Bureau, Inc.(National Electric Code)	(513) 381-6080

## **III. HOW DO I OBTAIN A PERMIT?**

**NOTE:** The Zoning Certificate must accompany the permit application.

Complete a building permit application and submit three copies of detailed sign plans and three copies of the site plan for review to the Department of Building Inspections, 138 East Court Street, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45202. Surveys and/or plot plans must be prepared and sealed by an Ohio registered surveyor. Sign plans must be prepared and properly sealed by an Ohio registered Architect or Professional Engineer. All design professionals must properly seal the plans which they are responsible for. A non-refundable plan processing fee must be paid at the time of application. Contact a Building Department Permit Specialist for details prior to submitting.

**NOTE:** Filing of an application for a sign permit does not constitute permission to begin the work.

An acceptable set of plans should include the following:

- A. Plot Plan - Drawn to scale showing:
  - 1. The amount of street frontage per business.
  - 2. Distance (in feet) from sign to lot lines and structures.
  - 3. North arrow.
  - 4. Location and description of existing and proposed signs.
- B. Written consent of the owner or lessee of the property upon which the sign is to be erected.
- C. Sign Illustrations
  - 1. All pages and data properly sealed by the appropriate design professional.
  - 2. The size and shape of the sign.
  - 3. Details of how the sign is to be supported, attached, anchored, braced, including foundations for poles, sign sections, etc.; existing and proposed materials, design loading specifications (wind, soil bearing capacity); structural calculations may be required (or stamped drawings).
  - 4. The message and height of letters on the sign.
  - 5. Lamp location (if the sign is not illuminated, indicate on plans).
- D. Electrical or Lighting Information
  - 1. All electrical devices and circuitry must be tested and listed by an approved organization (UL or other). A separate electrical permit is required.  
Contact Inspection Bureau Incorporated (IBI) (513) 381-6080

IV. **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I APPLY FOR MY PERMIT?**

The aforementioned agencies will review the application for its code compliance. The reviews occur nearly simultaneously to help expedite the application. If any of the agencies have questions or comments, they will contact the applicant (the person who signed the application form). Deficiencies noted require revising the drawings to comply with the local code(s). Corrected plans must be approved within 60 days. Upon receipt of all necessary approvals, a Building Department Permit Specialist will notify the applicant by telephone that the permit is ready and the balance of the permit fee that may be due.

V. **WHAT IS REQUIRED AFTER THE PERMIT IS ISSUED?**

All work must be performed in accordance with the approved plans, the *Hamilton County Zoning Resolution* (or applicable township zoning code), *Ohio Building Code*, the *Hamilton County Building Code*, the *National Electric Code*, and other applicable ordinances. The permit will expire if work is not started, is postponed, abandoned, or an inspection is not requested within six months of the issue date.

Every outdoor sign shall be plainly marked with the name of the person, firm or corporation erecting and maintaining the sign.

VI. **IF YOU MOVE OR GO OUT OF BUSINESS, YOU SHOULD TAKE DOWN YOUR SIGN. RELOCATED SIGNS REQUIRE A PERMIT.**

VII. **INSPECTIONS REQUIRED (24-hour minimum notice)**

Hamilton County Department of Building Inspections	(513) 946-3780
1. Soil Inspection	
2. Final Inspection	
Hamilton County Zoning Department (or applicable Township zoning)	(513) 946-4501
Inspection Bureau, Inc.	(513) 381-6080

VIII. **SIGN DEFINITIONS**

**Type of Work: New**

Installation of a new sign is new work. Permits are required for all new work except for signs painted directly on buildings, temporary yard signs, banners, signs erected by federal, state and local transportation authorities, signs not more than 2 ½ square feet in area, signs required by OBC Chapter 11 for Accessibility. A new sign shall be reviewed and approved to the current edition of the building code. Fee Schedule line 15A or 15B.

**Type of Work: Alteration (to existing sign)**

An alteration may be an existing sign which is moved or altered in a different manner or different arrangement from the way it previously existed. It also may be a change to the face of the sign and added or modified electric. (An example might be a change from a back lit sign to an LED Face.) An alteration requires a permit and shall conform to that required for new construction to the extent of the alteration. Fee Schedule line 15A or 15B.

**Type of Work: Repair**

Repairs are maintenance work when done in the same manner and the same arrangement as the sign's previous approval. A repair requires a permit but shall not be required to meet the provisions for new construction provided that it is not less safe than when originally installed. (Two examples might be the replacement of the sign after a catastrophic event, ie. wind, auto, fire, etc, or the building support fascia is altered.) Fee Schedule line 15A or 15B.

**Type of Work: Minor Repair**

Minor repair or maintenance work is nonstructural and non-electrical. It is done in the same manner and the same arrangement as the sign's previous approval and it has limited impact on safety. A minor repair does not require a permit. (An example might be the replacement of the plastic face of a sign which deteriorates and yellows. The existing face can be replaced without a permit as long as it is done with the same material and the same content.)